

DEPARTMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL



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The attorney general is a constitutional officer, an elected member of the executive department of state government, the chief law enforcement officer of the state, and head of the Department of Attorney General. His or her duties are prescribed by constitution, statute, court decisions, and tradition.

By virtue of the office, the attorney general is a member of numerous state boards and commissions, including the State Administrative Board, State Employees' Retirement Board, Judges Retirement Board, and the Michigan Law Enforcement Officers Training Council.

The attorney general is legal counsel for the legislature and for each officer, department, board, and commission of state government. He or she also assists in the conduct of official hearings held by state officers, departments, boards, and commissions.

The attorney general may intervene in any lawsuit, criminal or civil, which the interests of the people of the State of Michigan require. The attorney general advises the prosecuting attorneys throughout the state and may exercise supervisory powers over them. The attorney general may request the institution of grand jury proceedings to investigate crime, to investigate complaints for the removal of public officials, and to inquire into election frauds.

The attorney general appoints, from the civil service roster, assistant attorneys general, subject to budget appropriations, to assist in the discharge of the myriad functions of the department. Assistant attorneys general must be members of the State Bar of Michigan. Many of the assistant attorneys general have been admitted to practice before federal courts and agencies and most are specialists in a particular field of law. All of the legal work performed, opinions drafted, documents drawn, or proceedings instituted by the assistant attorneys general is done in the name of the attorney general and with his or her approval, or the approval of his or her designees.

There are 40 legal divisions in the department, providing a variety of legal services. For instance, the Consumer Protection and Charitable Trusts Division assists in solving consumer complaints. The legal divisions are Agriculture, Appellate, Casino Control, Child and Youth Services, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Collections, Consumer Protection, Corrections, Criminal, Economic and Career Development, Education, Environmental Protection, Finance, Freedom of Information, Habeas Corpus, Health Care Fraud, Health Professionals, Highway Negligence, Insurance and Banking, Labor, Liquor Control, Lottery and Racing, Mental Health, Native American Affairs, Natural Resources, Occupational Regulation, Prosecuting Attorneys Appellate Service, Public Administration, Public Employment and Elections, Public Health, Public Service, Retirement, Revenue, Social Services, Special Litigation, State Affairs, Tort Defense, Transportation, Unemployment, and Worker's Compensation.

The attorney general maintains an office in Detroit and branch offices in Escanaba, Grand Rapids, and Petoskey. The attorney general also appoints special assistant attorneys general to handle special matters such as local highway condemnation cases. The solicitor general is an

assistant attorney general who supervises appellate proceedings in the Michigan Supreme Court, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of the United States. The position of solicitor general was created by Act 144 of 1939.

The attorney general also recommends one of the assistant attorneys general to the governor for appointment as state public administrator, as originally provided for by Act 15 of 1923. The state public administrator is charged with the duty of administering all estates of decedents leaving no spouse or next of kin entitled to share in the estate. The state public administrator also may appoint, in any county of the state where deemed necessary, county public administrators.

